

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of providing advertising to a subscriber through a set top communications box connected to a television, the set top communications box having a connection to a global computer network, the method comprising:

storing icons and associated advertising information on a ~~central~~ server connected to the global computer network;

transmitting the icons and associated advertising information to the set top communications box;

displaying an icon on the television screen ~~over a television program~~ using the set top communications box, ~~the icon and associated advertising information being un-associated with the television program~~ the displayed icon being independent of a television program being displayed on the television screen by the set top communications box;

detecting an input signal indicating ~~the~~ that the displayed icon has been selected with an input device for the set top communications box;

retrieving the advertising information associated with the selected icon from the set top communications box after detecting that the icon was selected; and

displaying the advertising information on the television screen with the set top communications box.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the advertising information comprises reformatting a television program shown on the television screen and displaying the advertising information in a distinct frame on the television screen.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein displaying the icon comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon ~~over a~~ over the television program being displayed on the television screen.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 3, wherein detecting the input signal further comprises ~~generating~~ receiving a no input received signal ~~to the set top~~

~~communications box~~ after a fixed period of displaying the icon ~~followed by~~, the method further comprising displaying a second icon on the television screen in place of the icon.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4, wherein the fixed period is between 1 minute and 5 minutes after the icon is first displayed.

6. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, wherein transmitting the icons and associated advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to a memory in the set top communications box for display on the television screen and ~~following detecting one of the icons has been selected~~ wherein when the input signal indicating that the icon has been selected has been detected, transmitting the associated advertising information to the set top communications box.

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising displaying the associated advertising information in place of a of the television program being displayed.

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein transmitting the icons and associated advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to a memory in the set top communications box for display on the television screen and ~~following detecting one of the icons has been selected~~ wherein when the input signal indicating that the icon has been selected has been detected, transmitting the associated advertising information to the set top communications box.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein detecting the input signal further comprises ~~generating receiving~~ a no input received signal ~~to the set top communications box~~ after a fixed period of displaying the icon ~~followed by~~, the method further comprising displaying a second icon on the television screen in place of the icon.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the fixed period is between 1 minute and 5 minutes after the icon is first displayed.

11. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the icon comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon ~~over a~~ over the television program being displayed on the television screen.

12 – 17. (Cancelled)

18. (New) A method of providing advertising information to a subscriber through a set-top box connected to a television, the method comprising:

downloading by a set-top box an advertising icon from an advertising server through the Internet;

downloading by the set-top box an advertising information associated with the advertising icon from the advertising server through the Internet;

displaying by the set-top box a television program on a television screen and the downloaded advertising icon on the television screen at the same time;

receiving through an input device for the set-top box a user selection of the displayed icon;

displaying by the set-top box the advertising information associated with the selected icon on the television screen.

19. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein:

the icon has an associated link pointing to the associated advertising information;  
and

the step of downloading by the set-top box an advertising icon includes requesting a download of the associated advertising information from the advertising server using the associated link when the user has selected the displayed icon.

20. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of downloading by the set-top box an advertising icon includes:

after the user selection is received, requesting a download of the associated advertising information from the advertising server; and

receiving the requested advertising information by the set-top box.

21. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein displaying the advertising information includes displaying the television program being displayed on the television screen in a first frame and displaying the advertising information in a second frame different from the first frame.

22. (New) The method according to claim 18, further comprising displaying a different icon on the television screen when no user selection is received for a selected period of time.

23. (New) A set-top box for displaying television programs and user-selected advertising information comprising:

a modem connected to the Internet and operable to communicate with an advertising server through the Internet;

a user input device operable to receive user input; and

a processor connected to the modem and the user input device, and operable to:

download through the modem an advertising icon and an advertising information associated with the advertising icon from the advertising server through the Internet,

display a television program on a television screen and the downloaded advertising icon on the television screen at the same time, and

receive through the input device a user selection of the displayed advertising icon, and

display the advertising information associated with the selected advertising icon on the television screen.

24. (New) The set-top box according to claim 23, wherein after the user selection is received from the input device, the processor requests a download of the associated advertising information from the advertising server and receives the requested advertising information for display on the television screen.

25. (New) The set-top box according to claim 23, wherein the processor displays the television program on the television screen in a first frame and displays the advertising information in a second frame different from the first frame.

26. (New) The set-top box according to claim 23, wherein the processor displays a different icon on the television screen when no user selection is received from the input device for a selected period of time.